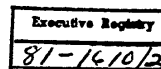


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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505



National Intelligence Officers

NFAC 4389-81

15 July 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Chairman, National Intelligence Council *RL*
16 HSR

FROM: Hugh Montgomery
National Intelligence Officer for Western Europe

SUBJECT: Communists in the French Government: Myth and Reality

1. French officials have made repeated utterances to reassure their friends and allies that the incorporation of Communist ministers in the government would have no security implications. Both Prime Minister Mauroy and Foreign Minister Cheysson have gone to some lengths to point out that sensitive functions relating to national security matters would be moved to other ministries. Further, Cheysson disparagingly referred to the Communist ministers as the "errand boys" of the Mauroy cabinet.

2. Reality, however, seems to be somewhat different. When Charles Fiterman, the second-ranking member of the French Communist Party and currently minister of transport (as well as being one of the senior "ministers of state") presented his cabinet to the press on 2 July 1981, he stressed the fact that with the exception of certain functions previously transferred to the ministry of the sea, "he retained all of the responsibilities of his predecessors, including the organization of transport for defense purposes." The French text of this statement by Fiterman, printed on page 10 of Le Monde of 4 July 1981, reads: "Le ministre des transports a tenu, d'autre part, à rappeler qu'il conservait, à l'exception des attributions transférées antérieurement au ministère de la mer, toutes les compétences de ses prédécesseurs, y compris l'organisation des transports pour la défense."

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3. Commenting on this statement, Le Monde, a newspaper of the Left which is essentially in sympathy with the Mitterrand government, pointed out that Fiterman's assertion weakened the statements by both Prime Minister Mauroy and Cheysson on the protection of French secrets from Communist access. Elaborating, Le Monde observed the following:

"If we take into account the transfer of certain functions to the Ministry of the Sea, the Ministry of Transport in its restructured form still has under its authority several organizations dealing with national defense."

4. After this general introduction, Le Monde then goes on to specify the continuing national defense responsibilities of the Ministry of Transport:

"...Moreover, a Commissariat General of Ground and Air Transport continuously supports the minister of transport in all matters deriving from the organization and execution of defense transportation. Further, a bureau called "General Matters and National Defense" of the service handling air bases, concerns itself with the organization of air bases in time of war, as well as being responsible for aeronautical installations to be utilized by allied forces. A bureau of naval aeronautics handles, in conjunction with the Ministry of Defense, problems of the aeronautical infrastructure..."

5. Concluding its commentary, Le Monde summarized its findings in these words:

"In a general sense, the Ministry of Transport is responsible for satisfying transport requirements for national defense, that is, the gathering together and employment of civil personnel and means of all kinds for military operations. It [the ministry] prepares the necessary measures for alerting both personnel and materiel, and its works out plans for national defense transportation."

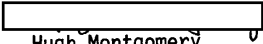
6. Apparently stung by the comments of some of his fellow ministers on these matters, Fiterman was questioned again on 3 July, when he paid a brief visit to his native village of Saint-Etienne. He said, apparently in response to a question from the press, and quoted in Le Monde of 5-6 July 1981, page 5:

"They say that, by including us in the government, they would like to tie our hands in order better to destroy us. We accept the challenge. We have no reason, by virtue of the fact that we agreed to join the government, to renounce that which makes us communists."

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"On dit que l'on voudrait, en nous intégrant au gouvernement, nous ligoter pour mieux nous réduire. Nous acceptons le défi. Nous n'avons pas besoin pour cela de renoncer à ce qui fait de nous des communistes."

7. In a word, it would appear that assurances from French officialdom notwithstanding, the available evidence indicates, rather strongly, that thus far there have been no significant changes in the Ministry of Transport which would reduce the access of the new Communist minister and his staff to sensitive operational information relating to transportation matters.


Hugh Montgomery

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